

REMARKS

The Examiner has allowed Claims 23-26, and has held that Claims 5 and 6 define patentable subject matter.

By this Amendment, Applicant has amended Claim 1 to include the limitations of Claim 5. Therefore, Claim 1 is equivalent to Claim 5, and is believed allowable. Claims 2-4 depend, directly or indirectly, from Claim 1, and are therefore also believed allowable.

New Claim 27 corresponds to Claim 6, which was held to define patentable subject matter.

Claims 5 and 6 have been cancelled as redundant.

Applicant has also cancelled Claims 13-22. This cancellation, as well as the amendment of Claim 1, is without prejudice to Applicant's right to file one or more further applications covering the subject matter of the amended and/or cancelled claims.

All of the claims now pending either have been allowed, or contain subject matter that has been held allowable. No discussion of the references is therefore believed necessary. All of the pending claims are believed in condition for allowance.

Version of Claims with Markings to Show Changes Made

1. (Twice Amended) In a one-piece plate for providing a fluid seal between two port faces, the plate including an interior opening having a boundary and a one-piece annular seal disposed within the boundary of the opening,

the improvement comprising a support ring disposed within the annular seal,

wherein the support ring has an outside diameter which is greater than an inside diameter of the seal and less than an outside diameter of the seal[.].

wherein the support ring includes at least one orifice which provides a fluid connection between said opening and said annular seal.

Please cancel Claims 5, 6, and 13-22, without prejudice.

Please add the following new claim:

27. (New) In a one-piece plate for providing a fluid seal between two port faces, the plate including an interior opening having a boundary and a one-piece annular seal disposed within the boundary of the opening,

the improvement comprising a support ring disposed within the annular seal,

wherein the support ring has an outside diameter which is greater than an inside diameter of the seal and less than an outside diameter of the seal,

wherein the support ring has an outer boundary which faces an inner border of the annular seal, and wherein the support ring is chamfered on

said outer boundary,

and wherein the support ring includes at least one orifice which provides a fluid connection between said opening and said annular seal.